

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's **OTHER** Newspaper



ALL OUT FOR 7TH MAY

These people are some of the twenty-two standing for election to the Greater London Council in Hackney on 7th May. The elections will decide policy in Greater London until 1985. That concerns you - and about nine million other people. There continues to be criticism of the two-tier system of governing such a large area - should power be given to the more local Borough administrations?

The GLC's responsibilities are mainly concerned with overall planning policy for London. It is also responsible for:

- Building and upkeep of metropolitan roads and control of traffic.
- Running London Transport.
- Running education in Inner London only, through the Inner London Education Authority.
- Maintaining parks, rivers, drains and canals.

- Control of construction work in Inner London.
- Disposal of rubbish.
- Licencing of vehicles, etc
- London-wide defence. Deep level shelters have been built for politicians and GLC members in case of nuclear war.
- Support for the arts.

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CND bring Peace

The Peace Fayre held at Hackney Town Hall on April 25 turned out to be a great success for the organisers, Hackney Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (HCND).

Hundreds of people attended the day's events, which brought together community-oriented groups from all over the area, and took the message of 'Peace and Disarmament' to many who otherwise might not have contact with CND's aims.

About 100 people joined Hackney CND on the day, bringing membership to over 400.

George Melly and the Mayor of Hackney opened the afternoon's events with the help of the Fallout Marching Band, who provided suitable anti-nuclear songs. CND 'Balloons for Peace' were released into the grey sky from the steps of the Town Hall. Inside,



organisations as diverse as the 'National Childbirth Trust' and a curious paper called 'Hackney People's Press', ran their own stalls and sold their own wares and material. In the evening three bands provided entertainment for about 200 people.

The day's events were curtailed only by an unwelcome combination of the police, William Whitelaw, the National Front and its various splinter groups. Only 37 hours before the Peace Fayre's procession through the borough was due

to start, the local constabulary informed the organisers that they would be unable to march through Dalston and Hackney as they had planned. This was due to the Home Secretary's twenty-eight day ban on demonstrations in the London area (traditional May Day events excepted). The state's reason for this curtailment of freedom was the general increase in tension following Brixton and other events, and the New National Front's plans to march in 'celebration' of Blair Peach's death. Instead

of banning only racist and fascist demonstrations, it was decided to use this as an excuse to hit at all organisations wishing to take their message onto the streets, CND included.

The marching band, which would have led the procession, put in an impromptu appearance at St John's churchyard, in Lower Clapton, before moving on to the main event.

Hackney CND were pleased with the success of the day, however. Perhaps they may have started an annual event. Who knows?

Time for advance

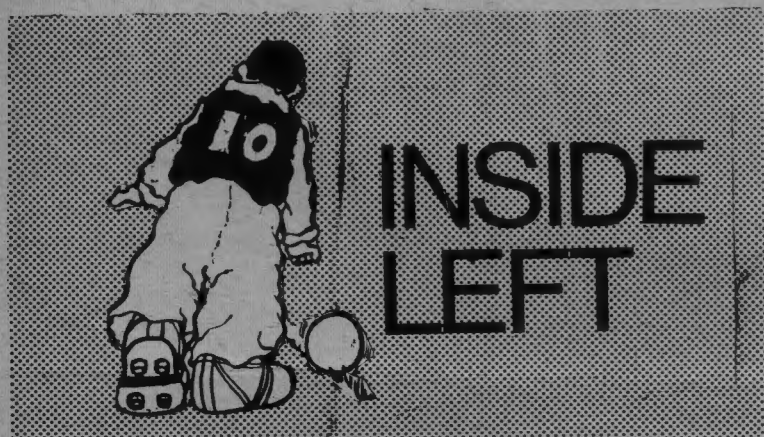
This month I am going to give you an Advanced Level course in how local councils operate. All the work you've done so far (if you've been following my brilliantly erratic teaching methods) would just about qualify you for a low grade CSE. We're now moving into at least A level - maybe even university grade - theory in the Inside Left course in Hackney Council politics.

Once you understand all this, you will become instantly much more boring and will be able to go on television wearing funny glasses at election times and crack jokes with Robin Day.

My subject tonight is the Local Government Committee

the Labour Party in Hackney. Members of it are elected from the General Management Committee of each individual party, each party getting 20 representatives. These people are not always councillors. In fact, the way in which the delegates are elected - from the individual wards, the trade unions, women's and Young Socialist sections and the chair and secretary ex officio is meant to ensure that they are not.

However, the theory, inevitably, breaks down. In Hackney, the local government committee has only met infrequently over the last three years. Some meetings have had to be cancelled



of Hackney Labour Party. Or rather (and this is where the complications start creeping in) the Local Government Committees of the three Hackney Labour Parties.

The Labour Party in Hackney is divided into three, corresponding to the three parliamentary constituencies. (This is all elementary stuff, but I want to make sure you're all awake at the back.) But the Council sits as one body, and 58 of its members, who were elected on the Labour ticket (still none has gone over to the SDP yet, but my beady eyes are trained hard on a few odd bods up in the far north) form the Labour group. That, however, is accountable to no one except itself. A sociologist would say something like "It constitutes a peer group having its own dynamic structure. That would contravene the Trade Descriptions Act.

Bright pupils amongst you - those who have spotted bow ties already in their pockets - will have noticed something. The Labour group is not accountable to the local Labour parties. Indeed it is not unknown for Labour group to think one thing and the individual Labour parties to think completely the opposite. This is usually called realism - or moral cowardice, depending on whose side you are on. And that is where the Local Government Committee of the Hackney Labour Parties comes in.

This is where the theory starts to get tricky. The Local Government Committee is meant to oversee the local government work of

because not enough people have turned up.

Things are beginning to look up, though, as a year of election fever begins to grip the borough. For it is the Local Government Committee which draws up the manifesto for the council elections. Thus it becomes important for the factions to ensure that the correct line gets put in the manifesto. Top grade students will know that the manifesto is, of course, immediately implemented with absolute zeal, as soon as a council takes office. There has never been any question about an elected council's total commitment to the platform it stood on. Especially when it only printed 500 copies, so the people couldn't see it.

Elections to the Local Government Committee were held at each General Management Committee meeting a few weeks ago. Connoisseurs of the political scene are still sniffing the delicate balance that this has thrown up, but with the pogrom suffered by the old guard in Hackney Central, it is thought that the Local Government Committee has swung firmly into the hands of the left. John Kotz has kept his seat, as a delegate from his ward, but the deposition of Martin Ottolangui and Eddie Millen as chairperson and secretary of the party means that they have gone.

Just a little space to tell you how accurate my predictions were for the top jobs on the Council Committees. Steve Scott for Finance, for instance. Biggest shock at was that Charlie Cable sneaked back into Housing Management by just two votes.

WHO'S WHO IN

COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party is putting up 13 candidates for the GLC elections, three of whom are standing for Hackney: Les Jones (Hackney Central), Helen Rosenthal (Hackney South) and Monty Goldman (Hackney North and Stoke Newington).

They are standing on the rather idealistic platform of "peace, freedom and justice" for all - the right to work, decent homes, cheap transport and "the best in education" - in short, a stop the cuts and stop the Tories platform.

The election address contains no practical suggestions on how the CP would carry out its aims if it got in. The Hackney candidates would freely admit that they don't expect to win; success would be if some CP candidates won seats under a Labour umbrella. As Helen

Rosenthal put it: "We're aiming to use the election to awaken people's interest in the GLC and to awaken their interest in the CP and a whole lot of issues with which the CP is concerned. The strategy of the CP involves building up this kind of alliance with people on the left and that primarily means people in the Labour Party. We recognise that we will never be in a position to do anything on our own".

She doesn't see this as an ideological compromise: the CP and Labour have the same aims. "The difference is that the Labour party doesn't challenge the Con-

servative and capitalist approach to politics, of getting elected into power and then legislating for change. We don't think that method will be successful. We agree on the end, but our means will be different. We will go back to the people."

The CP feels it is being taken more seriously and that the GLC elections will be a chance to prove this. They deny strongly that a vote for the CP will be a vote, in effect, for the Tories.

The stand that doesn't figure in other election addresses is that of women's liberation. The CP declares its support for London women's organisations, refuges for battered women and their children, positive employment schemes and more childcare facilities.

HOUSING

The GLC proudly boast that its housing policy has done much to help the individual and claims that by the end of the year 20,000 people will own their own homes. But what price this freedom if you become the owner of a house that is badly in need of repair? And what about the thousands of tenants forced to pay increasingly high rents for accommodation which, through lack of repair, is falling ever lower in standard?

A quick glance over the present GLC's housing record will show that Tremlett and his cronies in County Hall have little to boast about. While they are desperately trying to off-load their dilapidating housing stock onto the boroughs, who can ill afford to pay for their upkeep, it is obvious that the Tories are more interested in getting money off property development than in providing the service to the community - which means decent living accommodation - which our rates should be paying for. As property speculators like Greycoats and building contractors like Taylor Woodrow are given planning permission to build office blocks in Coin Street and St. Katherine's Dock, official reports on the housing crisis in London are delayed and censored and the body looking into these problems - the Housing Strategy Unit - axed. As revealed in Time Out in April, the Greater London House Condition Survey (1981) concluded that one in four of all London's houses - 635,000 dwellings in all - are in need of repair or lack basic conveniences, and a quarter of a million are "unfit for human

habitation". To put the boot in even further, the Tories even prefer to employ workers to smash up their empty houses to prevent the homeless making use of them.

It is obvious that the GLC, with the help of the Tory government, wants to wash its hands of all responsibility for providing decent homes for the people of London. Looking at its performance over the past four years, the GLC has nothing to be proud of.

ILEA

The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) although not controlled by the GLC, is an autonomous sub-committee of it. Each GLC councillor in Inner London is automatically a member of ILEA and in addition each of the eight borough councils has one nominee. Since the Inner London boroughs are in the main Labour strongholds, ILEA is invariably Labour-controlled, whereas the GLC swings between Labour and Tory control.

In recent months ILEA has successfully fought off an attempt by the GLC to split up ILEA and give control of education to the local councils in Inner London.

Teachers and other workers involved in education who support the "Hands off ILEA" campaign are now reaping the benefits of their victory in the form of deteriorating working conditions and widespread redundancies. The excuse given is the drop in the number of children of school age, and schools are being closed, or so-called "amalgamated". Hackney was one of the first areas to be affected by these "amalgamations". Eight out

of the eleven secondary schools in Hackney are involved. Dalston Mount, Edith Cavell, Shoreditch and South Hackney are to be amalgamated. In September this year three out of the four (not Dalston Mount) will have their usual intake. In September 1982 the amalgamation will take place and only Dalston Mount will take more students. The other three schools will be progressively run down until Dalston Mount becomes the only one remaining.

The same will happen to Brook House and Upton House schools and Brooke House will be closed. Clissold Park school and Woburn Down school will be amalgamated and Woodbury Down will close. Only Clapton Girls, Haggerston Girls and Hackney Downs Boys will be unaffected. Hackney Downs, however, is to lose three teachers, despite having no fall in rolls. The laughable excuse is that teachers are needed to ease the amalgamations.

ILEA claims that there are no plans for redundancies but that the pupil/teacher ratio will be maintained. ILEA must decide which excuse it is going to use for these disguised, but no less real, cuts in education provision in Hackney. If school rolls are falling, as ILEA claims, and the pupil/teacher ratio is to be maintained, then there must be redundancies.

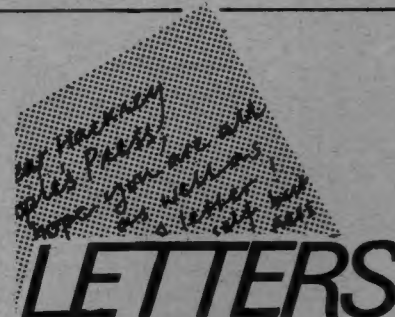
Dalston Mount will be massively overcrowded. It is already very short of equipment and space and has no gym. Any "surplus" teachers, after the amalgamation, could be moved to any school in the ILEA area. But even those willing to move are unlikely to find work as closures are going to be taking place all over London.

Dear HPP

Councillors should not vote for rate rises, rent rises, or cuts in public spending. To advocate that they should would be to support Thatcher and Heseltine.

But the fight has to be direct, physical. Householders will have to organise not to pay increased rates, local government unions not to collect them. Above all, each place will have to be physically occupied as that becomes necessary to defend it, and each job fought for.

The people have already



paid for the services we get, through existing taxes. Thatcher's slashing of the rate support grant is an attempt to force us to pay

again, through higher rates, for what we have already paid for! Thatcher meanwhile spends the money she has stolen from us on NATO, EEC, Cruise missiles.

No one should fall for Thatcher's lie, that destruction of our services is inevitable. No one should say by his or her vote that rate rises are good, cuts good, sackings good.

We have to say no to rate rises, no to sackings, no to cuts in services, no more Thatcher!

Yours sincerely
Will Podmore

HACKNEY FOR THE GLC

WRP

The Workers' Revolutionary Party are standing in two of the three Hackney constituencies (Peter Curtis in Hackney South and William Rogers in Hackney North and Stoke Newington) on the platform of:

- unite the trade unions and labour movements against the Tories;
- mobilise local communities in defence of jobs and services;
- build community councils to defend living standards and basic democratic rights.

The WRP has supported labour councils that have balanced their budgets by inflicting large rent and rates increases in order to maintain essential services and jobs. They justified this by saying that communities have to make sacrific-

ices to resist Tory attacks. The WRP does not seem to see that increases in rent and rates are just as much a cut in living standards as cutting services.

"Now the crunch has come," they claim, and they propose that Labour councils should lead the fight against the Tories. This fight should be through community councils which would include anyone from anti-cuts groups to small business and political parties including the Liberal Party and the Ecology Party. You could not accuse the WRP of being ultra-leftist or sectarian! Whether these councils consisting of such disparate groups will be willing or able to organise the broad masses to overthrow capitalism and set up a workers' revolutionary government, we will probably never know.

LABOUR

Labour, like the Tories, is contesting all 92 GLC seats. Hackney candidates are John Carr (Hackney Central), Gerry Ross (Hackney North) and Margaret Morgan (Hackney South). Main areas of action will be housing, transport and jobs.

Housing is a difficult issue as Labour councillors will have no way of knowing what Heseltine can and will do if they block the sale of GLC housing and the transfer of estates to local authorities. This is, however, Labour's stated intention and only time will tell whether a Labour GLC would challenge the government's housing policies. It intends to stop the high rents policy, inject funds into repairs and improvement schemes and introduce greater tenant involvement in estate management, together with resident caretakers. Part of this drive will be the creation of a new direct labour force, the London Community Builders, that will, hopefully, be taking on at least half the building works in London within a couple of years.

On transport Labour has a more concrete plan to offer. Fares will be cut by 25 per cent and frozen for four years, more money injected into London Transport to improve and expand services, a bus factory built and underground services extended to the docklands and south London. The fares cut will mean an extra 45p a week on

LIBERAL

In Hackney North, the Liberal candidate appears to know something that the rest of the country doesn't. He has described himself as the Liberal and Social Democrat candidate, thus making it unnecessary for any formal alliance between Mr Steel and the rest of the Gang. However, it is the same Liberal candidate as before - Maurice Owen - "a man you know really does care". He has adapted the Conservative red scare for his own use. "Remember, if you vote Lab-

rates, but at the same time Londoners will be saving over £1 a week in fares. The Hackney candidates are campaigning for an improved British Rail service to Hackney until an underground link is built.

Another central issue is employment. There are 250,000 unemployed in London; 100,000 have lost their jobs in the last year alone (and don't forget that vast numbers of people, particularly women, aren't registered as out of work). A Labour GLC would create what they call a Greater London Enterprise Board which would make grants and loans to companies to help them expand and so create more jobs. Preference will be given to co-operative ventures and similar small-scale businesses. The aim is to create 10,000 new jobs by 1983/4, at a cost of £100 million a year. Money for this scheme would come from GLC pension funds (£40 millions), and the balance from sources like trade unions' pension funds and even banks.

Specifically relevant to Hackney is the proposal to impose an immediate night-time ban on heavy lorries in Hackney, leading to a total ban in Inner London residential areas. Labour is also promising to improve roads and give more consideration to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Labour's response to the proposed CP alliance, as voiced by John Carr (standing for Hackney Central) was: "It's so unlikely to happen it's hardly worth commenting on". And he didn't.

our, it's not the Labour you used to know, but the Bennite, Marxist Left" warns his leaflet. Hackney North Liberals have thus ignored the fact that the retiring GLC member is none other than Ken Livingstone, whom Horace Culter and his Tory cronies are trying to paint as the Lenin of London.

The programme put forward in the Liberal election address is, to say the least, short. It tells us that we need an improved bus service, a tube line, more resources for nursery and primary education, renovation instead of bulldozing

ELWAR

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency are contesting three east London seats, under the banner of East London Workers Against Racism (ELWAR). Their campaign slogan, "Clean Up East London" - an old NF slogan - is to show that ELWAR too would like clean streets and decent roads in East London. The picture on the poster is more important, they say, and this shows a rat dressed up in a British flag depicting all those who put Britain before the working class, including the Labour party, and the Communist Party, about to be caught by the ELWAR trap.

In their campaign they say that they cannot promise anything since during a crisis there is not the money. However, they will

fight for the right to a job, a home and a decent life for all the people of east London, black and white.

By standing against the Labour Party (Joan Lamont in Hackney North and Stoke Newington), they are seeking to build an alternative to the Labour party. Indeed they say that the only difference between the Labour party and the Tory party is how each plans to make the working class in the borough pay the price of the capitalist crisis.

The crisis, they say, demands that the working class makes a decisive break with the Labour party. ELWAR are using the campaign to put forward their alternatives to the Labour party and would not mind if by taking votes from Labour the Tories got in. They do not consider they have a great

chance of winning a seat on the GLC, but if they did, they would use it to lead the working class fight for socialism.

"In East London, you have no choice - you are either for racism or against it," they say, "and all other parties are racist." ELWAR see themselves as the only people fighting racism in east London. Apparently black people are unable to lead the fight themselves. ELWAR do not agree with autonomous black groups.

ELWAR have supported and defended a number of families that have been subjected to racist attacks at a time when no other group is undertaking such work. However, in many cases, by substituting themselves for black self-defence, they have alienated and demoralised the very people they sought to help.

CONSERVATIVE

The chances of Hackney returning Tory councillors to the GLC are pretty slim, and it is obvious from the relatively low profile of the local Conservative candidates in the present campaign that they don't see much chance of breaking the Labour stronghold in any of the three seats.

It could also be due to the fact that Tory Central Office has had to tighten its financial belt and doesn't see the point of putting money on horses that have no chance of winning.

The main thrust of the Conservative electioneering is to put forward the "scare" that a Labour GLC will mean a London under Marxist rule. How wrong they are. Tory candidate for Hackney South, Bernard Lansman, warns that the Labour Party, especially in Hackney, is going further and further to the left and offers as "proof" the sacking of the leader and the deputy leader of Hackney Council. (We're sure that Messrs Kotz and Ottolangui will be surprised to hear this.) Lansman doesn't actually live in Hackney,

in fact he doesn't even live in London, but he was born and educated in the borough, runs a clothing firm in Mare Street and is a pillar of the local Chamber of Commerce. He is content to stand on the record of the present Tory GLC and points out that rates in Greater London have only risen by 11 per cent over the past four years. That may be so, but what about the GLC's record of decaying houses, dilapidated roads and deteriorating services?

Their solution to the housing problem is simple: to offload all the GLC estates to the local boroughs, as this will "save duplication of administration", and "improve maintenance and service". In effect, what this will do is to force councils like Hackney, which will have to take on the largest amount of housing stock, to increase their rates in order to carry out repairs and, inevitably, to increase rents on borough-controlled estates in line with those on GLC properties.

The Tories are also keen to revitalise London Transport. According to Jim

Murphy, who is standing for Hackney Central, the GLC is planning to extend the flat fare system to Inner London. Although he confesses that they have been slow in getting the scheme off the ground, he believes it has made an "in-road" into improving the service and is a better alternative to Labour's promise of reducing fares by 25 per cent as this will push up the rates and discriminate against the old and disabled (who already have transport concessions). A flat fare system alone may pay its way, but it won't buy more buses, improve efficiency or prevent traffic jams, which is one of the reasons LT has lost so many passengers.

Law and order, especially in the wake of events at Brixton, has become a burning issue in the election manifesto of "right"-minded Tories. Their main criticism lies with the left-wing councils like Hackney who prevent police officers like Mitchell from doing a "good job", and extremist agitators who, says Murphy, "indoctrinate" black kids and tell them "they are worse off than white kids".

He does admit that black kids do have problems, but are no worse off than white kids when it comes to getting a job (who are you kidding!) and anyway a lot of it comes down to their parents' "Victorian" attitudes. It seems a lot of people are living in the past.

returns showed that in some wards in Hackney they actually had a majority. Fortunately, this vote led to a great amount of anti-racist activity, including the formation of the Anti Nazi League, and the polls never reached this level again. But we should not forget that the NF is still there, even in its various factions. And the presence of a right-wing Tory government, pledged to introduce racist legislation like the current British Nationality Bill, shows that it is possible to cloak some of their policies with a veneer of respectability.

EXTREME RIGHT

The good news about the GLC elections is the total disarray of the fascist groupings. In London as a whole, there are at least four separate branches or splits from the old National Front. First, there is the Official National Front, the body which used to occupy the Great Eastern Street headquarters. This is now led by Martin Webster and Richard Verrall, and is supported in Hackney by Derrick Day and his thuggish following. Then there is the New National Front, led by ex-chairman John Tyndall. There is also the Constitutional Movement, which is supported by some members - or ex-members - of the Hackney NF,

and, somewhat bizarrely, a new town of 50,000 inhabitants in Docklands, to alleviate the plight of the homeless.

although they are not standing any candidates in Hackney. Finally, there are some other ex-Hackney NF members standing under the "Enoch Powell Is Right" label.

In Hackney, only two of these groups have candidates. Each constituency is being contested by the Official National Front and the Enoch Powell Is Right candidates. The EPIR candidates include Sylvia and David May, both of whom stood for the NF itself in the 1977 GLC elections. The Official NF candidates include Gerry Viner, the Jewish ex-Communist whom Derrick Day cites as being an example of why the NF is not anti-semitic (or so he says).

The last round of GLC elections was the high-water mark in NF electoral history. More than 100,000 votes were cast for them across London, and individual ballot-box



A passenger on a bus up Kingsland High Street will often ask "What's that" as it waits at the stop opposite the bright green shop front that is Centerprise. The answer will normally come back from the traveller's companion "That's Centerprise". The companion may know no more than that, but if he or she has ever been inside, then they may well come out with a description of what happens there. Sometimes neither person knows what it is, and waiting at the stop, then getting caught at the traffic lights, they get time to read and discuss the lettering on the front. "Coffee bar. Bookshop." Both pretty self-explanatory. "Free meeting rooms. Advice Centre. Local Publishing. Hackney Reading Centre. Playgroup and Youth Centre." Sounds mysterious and deep. Although Centerprise has only moved physically a few hundred yards from where it was set up in Dalston Lane 10 years ago, it has certainly changed in character by several degrees more. What was once described as a

"Maoist cell" by one local headmaster now supplies books regularly to some 35 schools. A place that in 1975 had to plead with the Council for funding to keep it going can now boast (if that's the right word) one ex-employee as an actual Councillor. What has led to the acceptance of Centerprise on Hackney's cultural and political scene?

EARLY DAYS

The first bookshop/coffee bar opened in Dalston Lane in May 1971. However, the roots go back further than that. The person generally credited with the idea and vision behind the project is Glenn Thompson, a young black American who arrived in England in the late 1960s. He started working at the Hoxton Cafe Project, a meeting place for young people in Hoxton, which was then on its last legs. Glenn realised that the drawback of the cafe was that it was not run on commercial lines. He thought that the same kind of young people attracted by the cafe would not practise the anti-social behaviour in a commercial set-up. Another American

youth worker, Nancy Amphoux, worked with Glenn in Hoxton, and between them they began to develop this idea.

The original prospectus they drafted with the help of others, including the ILEA youth office and outside advisors, makes fascinating reading today. The idea had grown up of having a shop as well as a cafe. Various suggestions were put forward - a travel agency, a record shop, a boutique - even a pet shop. But the most logical was a bookshop, and it was certainly something that had been in Glenn's mind for some time. One of the early workers had been with him in Israel in 1965, and they had discussed vague plans then.

WHY A BOOKSHOP?

The trade magazine, The Bookseller, noted the establishment of the bookshop when it opened and gave it a few months. Penguin Books laughed when asked for credit and said they sold just £100 worth of books a year in Hackney. There were no bookshops in deprived urban areas like Hackney because there was no demand, they thought. However, they were wrong. Experience has shown that a bookshop can survive and flourish in Hackney. Indeed, Centerprise was an early entrant in the now generally flourishing alternative bookshop field. There are now a number of similar shops up and down the country, many in inner-city areas with large working-class populations.

The reason for establishing Centerprise was explained in the original prospectus. In somewhat flowery language it stated that "the arts, youth and community work, social work and education itself, are not separate entities invariably requiring separate institutions. They are related and interdependent." The reason for the bookshop was later described as a cultural right. Ken Worpole, who was to set up the Publishing Project two years later, explained in his pamphlet Local Publishing and Local Culture, what that means. "A basic reason is...because, in their absence, many people are condemned for not taking an interest in books...What the very clever commentators have failed to take into consideration is that it is impossible for many parents, usually in working-class areas, to do so...Secondly, since we all have no choice other than to live in the society we live in, it is important that we all have the right to know as much about its nature as possible...Books, of course, are also entertainment and to have the choice of another form of entertainment is also important."

THE 1971 SCENE

Centerprise came into being in a very different world. It is hard, perhaps, to remember, but those days were really much less austere. Large charities with social

consciences were comparatively pretty thick on the ground, and a lot of hard work from the original three workers meant that funds were readily raised. Getting money for a similar project these days would be by no means as easy. The political situation was also different from today. There was a spirit of confused idealism and revolt amongst young people then. "It is wrong to think of Centerprise in terms of just Glenn Thompson and Anthony Kendall" (two of the original workers) says Neil Martinson, then a pupil at Hackney Downs School, and later to become a full-time staff member. "The National Union of School Students were very active and strikes were happening in the schools." Centerprise provided a focus for a number of groups of young people involved in these activities. A few of them had also been involved in the Hoxton Cafe Project and had travelled the mile up Kingsland Road to Dalston.

Certainly things seemed always to be happening in the early Dalston Lane days. Projects came and went: young people's theatre; poetry readings; a community arts project; most ambitious of all: a Learning Exchange - an attempt to put people with skills in direct touch with people who wanted to learn from them. Soon a separate children's bookshop was set up along the road at number 66. A silk screen printshop was established in Lenthall Road, half a mile

away (still running, under separate management!).

THE MOVE

However, Dalston Lane was an area scheduled for redevelopment (it still is). When the original short lease ran out, Centerprise could only get extensions for one month at a time. This was obviously unsatisfactory, and it was decided to move. A double-fronted shoe shop in Kingsland High Street was found.

The 1978 Report described the move as leaving behind memories of a cozy half-world of a dying hippie culture, the last sad cafe. Certainly there are a few people still who see the move as the biggest mistake that Centerprise ever made. However, no one would then have predicted that seven years hence the old building would still be in use (by the Hackney Pensioners' Association) and the redevelopment of Dalston Lane still waits. Certainly, the busier atmosphere in a main shopping street means that Centerprise has become a more commercial operation and a crowded Saturday in the bookshop or the queues for lunch on a weekday indicate that a need is being filled.

PUBLISHING PROJECT

Perhaps the most spectacular success of Centerprise is its publishing project. Ken Worpole was an English teacher at Hackney Downs, and he and a friend worked out the idea of a reading book specifically

BIRTHDAY EVENTS

Centerprise's tenth birthday will be celebrated during May by a series of events and festivities. The following had been arranged at the time of press.

- 12 May: Talk - "Bethnal Green - Weavers' Parish to Working Class Community, with Raph Samuel at 8 pm.
- 13 May: Hackney People's History Group launch "Coming To Hackney". Evening of readings - "The Immigrant Experience", organised by Hackney WEA.
- 19 May: Hackney People's History Group follow-up meeting. From these two meetings, Hackney WEA is hoping to form a regular workshop on the subject, "Coming To Hackney". Anyone interested in sharing their own and other people's experiences with a view to a possible collection of work is very welcome.

16 May - 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT LONDON FIELDS!
1.30 - 5 pm

Managing Directors, Monkey Business and Deleted (Hackney Musicians' Collective) will be performing. Animals from Mudchute***Kebabs by Turkish Workers' Union Screening of film "Somewhere In Hackney" Stalls***Sideshow***Jumble Sale***Bric a brac Traditional Greek and Turkish dancing Badge making***Silk screening (bring your own T-shirt) Refreshments***Secondhand bookstalls

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Wednesdays in May - Women's self-defence classes (women only). Please contact Centerprise for further details.

Under Fives Soft Play - in May, Hackney Under Fives will be launching a regular soft play session in Centerprise basement. Please contact HUF for further information.

22 May - Centerprise 10th Anniversary at Chats Palace

Oxy and the Morons, Lazy Lizards plus supporting group Tickets £1.50 (waged), 75p (unwaged) from 1 May at C'prise

For further information on any of the above, contact Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8. 254 9632.

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ENTERPRISE

set in Hackney, illustrated with photographs specially taken in the streets and markets of the area. They approached Centerprise with the idea and were enthusiastically welcomed. The book, "Hackney Half Term Adventure", was a great hit with both local children and teachers, and went through several editions, eventually selling 10,000 copies. Ken also brought along the poems of a young West Indian boy, Vivian Usherwood. The first 500 copies of this quickly sold out, and more than 9,000 copies have now been sold. A sad footnote is that Vivian died tragically in a house fire in Stoke Newington earlier this year. Any other poet published by a commercial firm whose only book had sold so many copies would have been a household name. It is typical of Centerprise publications that this is not so.

Centerprise's most important contributions to publishing have been through the two related fields of working-class autobiography and people's history. Spectacular successes have included people like Ron Barnes, a taxi driver who has had two books of autobiography published, and Arthur Newton, retired shoemaker; two books about school: "The Gates" by Leslie Milder and Bill House, and Roger Mills' "A Comprehensive Education". Then there have been the multi-authored volumes, such as "Working Lives" (in two volumes) and "The Island", about an isolated area of Stoke Newington, which led a virtually self-contained life for the best part of 100 years. These books have had a wide critical acclaim but, more crucially, they have been exceptional sellers in Hackney itself. In one 11-month period, nearly 7,000 titles were sold in Hackney alone.

Centerprise is also a founder member of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, a group which brings together writers' workshops and small publishers from all over the country.

ADULT READING

Work on publishing and book-selling led inevitably into other fields, notably adult literacy. An initiative by Centerprise led to a full-time lecturer from City and East London college being seconded to the Hackney Reading Centre, which occupies the largest single room in the Centerprise building. At one point this worker, Sue Shrapnell, was the only adult literacy teacher in the borough.

CO-OPERATION

Despite some protestations to the contrary, Centerprise is really controlled by its workers. They are the people who are in the building all the time, they are the ones that have to clean the lavatories, look after the cats, run the shops, operate the switchboard and pay the bills.

Damage to the bookshop after an arson attempt in August 1977. (Pic: Ernie Greenwood).



There is a Council of Management elected every year from an annual general meeting of the "company", a body which is open to anyone who lives in the borough. However, the grandiose-sounding Council of Management really only operates in an advisory capacity. Centerprise has generally been very lucky in its workers. It has always operated a strict job selection procedure, and has often refused to appoint anybody to a vacancy, preferring to re-advertise, or go back to discuss whether the job is necessary in the first place. Time and time again, attempts have been made to get user groups more involved in the running of the project. These have always had only limited success.

The core of the workers' control is a very long meeting every Monday. Here personal reports are given, correspondence discussed, work planned, responsibilities allocated. It's an exhausting, exhaustive process.

Perhaps this is the most strikingly different way in which Centerprise has evolved from the way originally envisaged. The early visionaries behind the project talked of enabling "them" to take over from "us" (their words), thus seeing themselves as "catalysts". That certainly has not occurred. Many of the workers - though not all - have been outsiders, at least in the sense of not having been born or brought up in Hackney. Many of these, however, have lived in the borough for some time before going to work at Centerprise. However, it's wrong to see the workers as just "professionals" working in the increasingly trendified area of Hackney - a borough in which there seem to be more paid community workers - in the loose sense - than anywhere

else in the country.

The difference behind the Centerprise vision of a community worker and that prevalent amongst some other users of the word is that it sees the community as something different: it is a socialist vision of a future better world. Ken Worpole described it thus, in the conclusion of "Local Publishing and Local Culture": "(Community) is properly the right word to be used, but it has been so distorted...that in some cases I think it is a word and an idea that we will have to reappropriate at a later point in time, when it once again suits our needs and not the needs of those who are so concerned to impose the sense of 'community' upon us as cheap substitute for a radically different, and better, society. Community, like history, is not something which happens by accident; not given but made."

Tony Benn is fond of describing the way in which socialism is discussed in the media as though it was a crazy concept. Something that cannot be talked about until the children have been put to bed. He then talks about the little bits of socialism that we already possess. We have a free welfare state, a free education service and so on. With all their faults, they are of course a step along the socialist road. On its better days, in its better ways, that is what Centerprise is also. It's a small step forward for socialist ideas put into practice, a taste of what cooperation and idealism can produce. And, believe it or not, it works!

Many other things go on in Centerprise besides those mentioned above. Thanks to all those who helped in the preparation of this article. CF

HEALTH PLANS COVER-UP

As was reported in last month's HPP, the City and Hackney Community Health Council (CHC) condemned the preparation of plans for nuclear war being drawn up by the Area Health Authority on instructions from the Department of Health and Social Security.

City and Hackney CHC's access to these plans has been obstructed. It is likely that their exposure would lead to the AHA's embarrassment and antagonism from the public. Vague excuses have been given by the AHA's medical officer, Dr Frank Murphy. At the last City and East London AHA meeting, on April 9, he was asked by CHC representative Helen Rosenthal what these war plans entailed and how much it would cost. Dr Murphy replied that it was all rather "hazy" at the moment, and that only one person for the entire area would be employed to oversee these plans. It seems rather silly to employ someone full-time to oversee such "hazy" plans (plans which have been in the pipeline since 1978) especially at a time when many other members of staff are being made redundant.

It sounds like a blatant cover-up by the City and East London AHA to prevent the people in their borough from knowing how much taxpayers' money is being spent and will continue to be spent on war planning, not to mention knowing the sordid facts about what

would happen to medical services in the event of a nuclear attack warning. The indication is that medical services would be completely withdrawn from the area, leaving the sick and dying to be looked after by voluntary services such as the Red Cross.

One member of the AHA stated that the meeting shouldn't be allowed to be a platform for "political pressure groups", such as CND. There couldn't be a more valid platform for the issue of nuclear disarmament which concerns us all and our right to continue to live and work in a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons.

The AHA has a closer relationship with the war industry than they care to admit. The cuts in health spending are being made to provide the government with more money to be spent on defence, ie nuclear weapons.

A letter from Hackney CND is being sent to all the members of City and East London AHA deploring the spending of any public money on war planning and asking them to make a statement on these vital issues. It is also up to every person who deplores the use of nuclear energy for civil and military purposes to lobby their own doctors and to respond to any attacks made on the CHC or those members of the medical profession who have taken a positive stand to say No to nuclear weapons.

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Weep No More

The Youth Opportunities Programme is being expanded at the same time that many workers on the programme are questioning how, and whether, it should operate in the future.

Question: What scheme makes Thatcher look as if she cares about the young unemployed while at the same time -

**replaces regular workers with cheap labour?*

**demoralises many of its participants?*

**shortens youth unemployment figures by up to 440,000?*

Answer: The Youth Opportunities Programme. (YOP)

Workers on the Youth Opportunities Programme seem to be slipping into a depression recently. Many are questioning the value of their schemes in an ever-decreasing job market and wondering how long they can defend them against the charge that they are just 'elaborate time-fillers'.

Although the number of trainees leaving YOP schemes for jobs has now dropped to 40% and is continuing to fall, the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) still envisages that "jobs should eventually be available for most participants after taking part in the programme". Perhaps the new rules that allow trainees to go from one YOP scheme onto another is the basis for this rationale.

EXPLOITED

The recent Youth Aid Report disclosed that 30% of employers admitted using YOP trainees to replace their regular workers. This is probably an underestimate and YOP workers' personal experiences show that the exploitation of trainees also takes other forms. Most workers on YOP could mention cases like the following:

A large oil company approached a YOP office training course asking if trainees could be spared from their course for two weeks "extra" work experience. It turned out that the firm was short staffed and hoped to avoid temp. agency fees.

A large distillers asked for a trainee finishing a YOP course who might do a 6 month WEEP placement. (These placements give the employer a free pair of hands, since the Manpower Services Commission pay the trainee an allowance of £23.50 a week.) The firm explained that they had a vacancy for a clerk but they hoped to see how the young person worked for 6 months before employing them. The trainee had no guarantee of being kept on the job.

Another recent problem is that YOP courses are finding it harder to find employers willing to take on a trainee for short 2-week placements. This is obviously partly due to the recession but could also be due to the employers negotiating directly with the MSC for WEEP trainees, who are more useful because they stay at least 6 months.

FROZEN

The trainees' allowance has been frozen at the 1979 level of £23.50 - hardly a decent figure to support yourself on, especially when this can include rent, fares to work and clothes for an interview. The Government seems to think that all 16-19 year olds who are unemployed should live with their parents. DHSS pays extras for single mothers on YOPs courses, but they are by no means quick or easy to get.

Community Industry, a similar scheme to YOP run by the National Association for Youth Clubs, manages to pay an allowance of £31 per week for trainees aged 16, rising with age.

Because trainees may be on a YOP scheme for as little as three weeks or 13 weeks, they have great problems in complaining collectively about the level of their allowances. However, some groups of trainees have managed to get off the ground and YOP workers should try to back them in getting allowances

increased.

Another worrying development noted on some YOP courses is that the wages of trainees who do obtain work are falling. One junior job was recently spotted in a Clapham Job Centre which paid only £25 a week gross. Again, it is not clear how much the recession or the precedent set by YOP is to blame.

ARMY

The recent disclosures in the Times Educational Supplement that the Government has considered putting YOP trainees in the Army leaves YOP workers wondering where else the programme could lead to. Obviously someone in the Government appreciates that as things become more desperate, young people would even consider joining 'the Professionals' for less than £25 a week.

There are some very good YOP schemes in London, but they are finding that there are a great many problems in YOP that it was all too easy to ignore while most trainees achieved their aim of a job. Now that the recession has cut down their chances of ever finding employment, it is time for YOP workers to get together, in the same way that the trainees are doing. It is often suggested that "young people should be trained mainly in self-sufficiency to cope with a non-working society". It is a solution that has already been adopted in Liverpool, but there is still a great resistance to this among YOP workers in London.

It would also be better to try out other solutions, such as trying to obtain a shorter working week. Whatever the solution, it is important that workers and trainees get together, so that the problems can be aired and a positive, collective campaign is started.

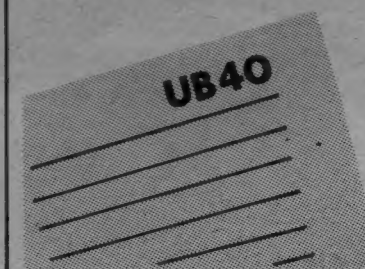
What to do when you become unemployed

Mike Smith had been employed by a firm for ten years. He's just been told that the firm is going to make him redundant at the end of the week. His wife, Janet Smith, looks after their three young children of 3, 7 and 11 years. What should he do to get financial help?

1. Signing On

As soon as Mike knows he is to lose his job he must go and register for work at the local Employment Office or Job Centre. The address will be in the phone book under 'Employment, Department of' or at the Post Office. HE WILL LOSE MONEY IF HE DOESN'T SIGN ON IMMEDIATELY.

If possible he should take his P45 or a note of his



National Insurance number. This will speed up his claim. Mike will have to sign on every two weeks to receive his money.

2. Benefits You Can Get

Because Mike had paid enough N.I. Contributions he will get £18.50 UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT for himself, PLUS additions of £11.40 for his wife and £1.70 each for the children. His total basic Unemployment Benefit will be £35 per week. On top of this he will get an earnings related supplement of £8 per week based on his past wages of £75 per week. (It should be noted though that this supplement is going to be abolished in Jan 1982.) HOWEVER, Mike will probably have to wait for up to two weeks before receiving any Unemployment Benefit (U.B.) while his contribution record is being checked out.

ALSO.....
With rent and rates of £24

per week the money he'll get from U.B. will not be enough to cover his weekly costs.

SO.....

Mike will need to go to Supplementary Benefits to get money to tide him over until his UB comes through and also to top up his UB. To do this he should get a form 'B.1' from the Employment Office. He should fill this in and take it to his local Supplementary Benefits Office, whose address he will be given at the Employment Office.

Jackie Lewis has also just lost her job. She is a single parent with two children, both under 11 years.

When Jackie went to sign on she found that she had not paid enough N.I. Contributions to get UB. As she is a single parent she does NOT have to make herself available for work, unless she wants to register for a job.

Whether she decides to 'sign on' or not she will have to go to Supplementary Benefits in order to get help.

The examples we have given of claiming UB provide a very simple picture of what to do when you lose your job. In practice there are a lot of hitches and conditions that may make your experiences of signing on very different from those of Mike Smith and Jackie Lewis.

You can get a leaflet explaining most of the conditions and circumstances where UB is due, from the local Employment or Social Security Office called: 'Unemployment Benefit' (NI 12).

Next month we will explain how to claim Supplementary Benefits. If you need further advice or information go and see your local Advice Centre.

Small Ads

DALSTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE requires a Co-ordinator, 20 hours a week. For job description write to: Dalston Children's Centre, 9a Sandringham Road, E8, tel. 254 9661. Closing date 7 June, 1981.

CYCLE OUTINGS, not too far, not too fast, some Saturday afternoons plus occasional YHA weekends. Current programme - send s.a.e. to: Family Cycling Group, 274 Queensbridge Road, E8.

WANTED URGENTLY, a piano. Please ring Doug 533 2977.

Take advantage of HPP's cheap small ad rates. Best value in East London - just 3p per word. Must be paid for in advance. Send your copy plus payment to HPP, 85 Dalston Lane, E8. May deadline is

HACKNEY PATIENTS DUMP

There are six Hackney patients in Rampton, the Special Security Hospital in the wilds of Nottinghamshire, which is said to be the most brutalising institution of its kind in the country.

Mary Sugden, Hackney's Director of Social Services, told councillors last September that these patients were visited regularly by Dr Stewart of Penrose House, Hackney; but she did not say what was being done to get them out of Rampton.

At the same councillors' conference it was revealed that there were in all 238 patients from Hackney in mental handicap hospitals, all but a few of them outside the borough. The majority are in the ring of 19th Century

asylums that surrounds London. This fact only became apparent when councillor Ruth Gee insisted on a map to show where there the hospitals were situated.

These patients include the 161 at St Lawrence's, Caterham, Surrey, mentioned in the March issue of HPP. St Lawrence's and Leavesden in Hertfordshire are 2000-bed institutions opened by the Metropolitan Asylums Board to relieve London workhouses of their "harmless, incurable idiots", at the cheapest possible expense. Today St Lawrence's is amongst the 7 poorest hospitals in Britain and its management team say it makes Rampton "look like a five-star hotel".

To these figures for the

mentally handicapped must be added those for the 'mentally ill' if we are to get the true picture of how many people have been dumped in the old asylums. In 1977 the Hackney Mental Health Action Group 'discovered' 80 Hackney patients in Longrove Hospital, Epsom, Surrey, who had apparently been "forgotten" by Hackney's Health and Social Services Authorities!

Lack

Most members of the Council's Social Services Committee demonstrated their lack of interest by staying away from a recent council seminar on 'Services for the

Mentally Ill'. At this it was confidently asserted that no psychiatric patients were now sent to mental hospitals outside the borough. There are two psychiatric units in Hackney: Hackney Hospital's F Block and the German Hospital. Statistics in the seminar briefing paper showed 132 admissions to hospitals 'other' than Hackney and the German! "Where are the others then", asked one councillor who had read her briefing papers. She received no reply.

Since 1959 the responsibility for rehabilitating patients in the community has legally rested with the local councils. Until a few years ago Hackney had completely ignored these responsibilities.

WHAT'S ON May

If you want a free listing in our What's On section, send details of your event to HPP, 85 Dalston Lane, E8.

THEATRE

LITTLE ANGEL MARIONETTE THEATRE

14 Dagmar Passage, Cross St, N1
(Book by 'phone on 226 1787)

Sats & Suns, 9, 10, 16 & 17 May:
'The Little Mermaid' by Hans

Christian Andersen.

Perfs: 3 pm.

Sat & Sun 23 & 24 May:

Demonstration Lecture by Jan Bussell on 'The Art & History of the Puppet Theatre'. 3 pm.

THEATRE ROYAL, STRATFORD EAST

Gerry Raffles Sq, E15.

(Box office: 534 0310)

Till Sat 9 May: 'Chorus Girls'

Perfs: 8 pm Mons-Sats.

From Friday 15 May: 'Hamlet'

Perfs: 8 pm Mons-Sats.

CINEMA

KONAK CINEMA 11 Stoke Newington Rd (254 2415)

May Programme

Sun 3: 'Scanners'

Sun 10: 'Fan House'

Sun 17: 'Elephant Man'.

All programmes run for 7 days.

Tickets: £1.90 Adults

£1.00 Children

RIO CINEMA 107 Kingsland High St, E8 (254 6677)

For details of this month's programmes, see the Rio Ad.

MUSIC

CROWN & CASTLE

Dalston Junction, E8

(Telephone 254 3678)

The Meeting Place folk club has Irish folk music every Friday, Saturday & Sunday evenings, performed by resident band Cara, plus surprise guests.

8.30-11.00 pm. Free.

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42/44, Brooksby's Walk, London E.9. 986 6714

EVENTS IN MAY

Thurs 7 at 8 pm £1.00 Modern Jazz with ELTON DEAN

Fri 8 at 8 pm Benefit for Homerton Grove Adventure Playground with: THE COLOURS, THE LINES, THE PALOUKAS & THE AMERICANS. Ring for prices

Sat 9 at 8 pm £1.50 GROUP 3 THEATRE in 'BABY KILLER' by Steve Wilmer. (OAPs & kids: 75p)

Sun 10 at 12 noon 60p; LUNCHTIME JAZZ with JAZZ MIME QUARTET accompanied kids free.

Fri 15 8-11 pm EAST LONDON WORKERS AGAINST RACISM BENEFIT. (Bands to be confirmed).

Sat 16 8-11 pm £1.50; LEABRIDGE CP BENEFIT for the PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR JOBS, with a Cabaret, Disco, food & real ale bar. unwaged: 75p

Sun 17 12 noon 60p; LUNCHTIME JAZZ Session with GRAHAM READ. accompanied kids free.

Thurs 21 at 8 pm £1.50 JAZZ NIGHT with JOHN STEVENS.

Mon 27 at 7.30 pm ELECTION FORUM with Hackney Central GLC candidates.

HOMERTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

THE PEGASUS 109 Green Lanes, N16. (226 5930)

Fridays: 'Juice on the Loose'

Saturdays: 'Big Chief' (both £1)

Sun 3, 10, 17, 31: Music

from Zaire with 'The Ivory

Coasters' (£1)

Sun 24: 'Ricky Cool & the

Rialtos' (Soul) £1.

Mondays: 'Brett Marvin & the

Thunderbolts' (Blues) 75p.

Tues 5, 12: 'The Rinky Dinks'

(Rockabilly) 80p.

Tues 19, 26: 'Small Change'

(New Wave) 80p.

Wednesdays: 'Rock n' Roll with

'J.J. & the Flyers' £1.

Thursdays: 'Hank Wangford'

(Open till 11.30) £1.25.

Open from 8-11 pm unless

otherwise stated.

MEETINGS

HACKNEY FIGHTBACK

Meets on the first Monday of the month. Meetings are open to affiliated groups, to discuss strategy for fighting cuts in local services.

8 pm at the Labour & Trades Club, 96 Dalston Lane, E8.

NORTHWOLD LABOUR PARTY

Sat 30 May: Jumble Sale and Event. With photographic exhibition and display about housing conditions in the ward. 2 pm at Northwold School, Northwold Rd, E5. Admission: 5p, children and OAPs 2p.

MATTHEW O'HARA COMMITTEE

Monthly meetings for anyone concerned about conditions in prisons and mental hospitals. Next meetings: Thurs 7 May and 4 June. 8 pm at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E8. Enquiries: 986 5251.

Tues 12 May: Press Conference to launch Inquest, United

Campaigns for Justice. This group is a national organisation bringing together individuals and organisations in a united campaign against the procedures of inquiry used in dealing with complaints of state violence in general and deaths in custody in particular. Sponsors: Richard Campbell, Jimmy Kelly, Matthew O'Hara and Blair Peach Committees. 12 pm at The Metropolitan Pub, 95 Farringdon Rd, EC2.

LONDON ADVICE CENTRES GROUP

Mon 18 May: Meeting on the new Supplementary Benefit Scheme. With Janet Allbeson from the Child Poverty Action Group. The session is intended to offer people the opportunity to hear CPAG's views and reflections on the scheme's problems and potential. 10.15 am in the Committee Room, CWS, 54 Chalton St, NW1. Details from: CWS, 68 Chalton Street, NW1.

HACKNEY LABOUR FORUM

Sun 10 May: The group will be holding practical discussions for the left in the 3 Hackney Labour Parties and will cover issues such as a new platform for Hackney Council and black and ethnic organisation within the Party. 3 pm by the front door, Town Hall, Mare St.

HACKNEY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Wed 13 May: The society will be holding a meeting, with Mr. Hume of the Association of Recreational Gardeners, to discuss the setting up of an allotment society. 7.30 pm in the Assembly Rooms, Stoke Newington Town Hall, Stoke Newington Church St, N16.

LONDON ASSOCIATION OF ARTS CENTRES

Mon 11 May: One-day spring, Conference on 'The Arts & Unemployment'. 10 am - 5 pm at Inter-Action, Talacre Open Space, 15 Wilkin Street, London NW5.

OTHER EVENTS

ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE

Sat 2 May: March Against the Nazis. Assemble 2 pm at Hackney Downs.



HACKNEY CND - MAY EVENTS

Mon 11: Business Meeting. 8 pm at Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, E8. New members welcome.

Wed 13: 'The Bomb' - a film by Jonathan Dibleby. 7.30 pm at Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, E8. Free.

Wed 20: Talk on the USSR: 'Soviet History and Policy' by Ken Spours. 8 pm, Room 2, Trades Hall, 96 Dalston La, E8.

HACKNEY WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

SPRING PROGRAMME

TRADES UNIONS AND THE ECONOMY Free course for members of any trade union. The course examines the Labour movement's alternatives to monetarist economic policy. Ten Wednesdays from April 29, 7.30-9.30 pm at the Hackney Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Tutor, Nina Fishman.

THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE Most of us are immigrants to Hackney. The new People's Autobiography Class explores what it feels like to move into the borough. To be launched by an evening of readings on 'Coming to Hackney' on Wed 13 May, the course itself will start on Tues 19 May. Fortnightly, at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E8. Ring 254 9632 for dates nearer the time.

WOMEN TODAY Every Wednesday, 1.30-3.30 pm at Hoxton Hall, 128 Hoxton St, N1. Playgroup available to keep the children happy while you enjoy an afternoon of talks and discussions on topics of your choice. Tutors: Iris McCann and Margaret Shepherd.

COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES TO MENTAL HOSPITALS AND PRISONS Special meetings, Centerprise, 7 pm. Wed 20 May. With Doug Tilbury, social worker, on the pressures social workers face to compulsorily admit people to mental hospitals. Thurs 28 May: Vanguard and other Hackney projects for ex-psychiatric patients explain how they work. Wed 17 June: Alternatives to Prisons. For more information, ring 986 5251.

HACKNEY WRITERS' WORKSHOP An open workshop for local people interested in writing as a means of self-expression. Part of a national network of working class writers' groups. Fortnightly on Wednesdays, 8 pm at Centerprise. Next meeting: 6 May.

The branch AGM will be held at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E8, on Thursday 21 May at 8 pm. Everyone is welcome at the WEA and suggestions for new classes are also welcome. For any further information, write to the Branch Secretary, 76 Carysfort Rd, N16.

Class fees: 40p an evening; 20p claimants and pensioners. Less or free if you cannot afford them.

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Tel : 254 6677

Weekly Programme

Sat 2 May

BEING THERE (A) (8.40 pm) & THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S FALL (7.00 pm)

Mon 4 May for 6 days

RAGING BULL (X) (5.55, 8.20 pm [+Sat only 3.30 pm])

Mon 11 May for 6 days

MY BODYGUARD (A) (5.30 & 9 pm) & BREAKING AWAY (A) (7.15 pm [+ 3.45 pm Sat only])

Mon 18 for 6 days

THE LACE MAKER (AA) (5.05 & 9 pm) & JONAH WHO WILL BE 25 IN THE YEAR 2000 (7 pm [3 pm Sat])

Tue 26 May

BROTHERS & SISTERS (AA) (5.20 & 8.50 pm) & RADIO ON (X) (7.00 pm. [+ 3.55 Sat])

Sunday Matinees

May 3 (& Mon 4) at 3 pm

THE SEVEN SAMURAI (X) (Subtitles)

May 10 at 3 pm

THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE (X)

May 17 at 2 pm

EFFI BRIEST (AA) & THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT

May 24 at 3 pm (& Mon 25)

THE TEMPEST (X) & GREY GARDENS (AA)

Friday & Saturday Lates (all at 11.15 pm)

Sat 2 May

THE GODFATHER Part I (X)

Fri 8 May

SILVER STREAK & YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

Sat 9 May

THE GODFATHER Part II (X)

Fri 15 May

THE HARDER THEY COME (X) & THE VALIANT ONES (AA)

Sat 16 May

APOCALYPSE NOW (X)

Fri 22 May

REEFER MADNESS, SEX MADNESS & COCAINE FIENDS

Sat 23 May

THE DEERHUNTER

Rent & Rates action

NIGHTINGALE

There is general anger felt by tenants on the GLC-owned Nightingale Estate at the recent rent/rate increase. Rent, for example, has risen over one hundred per cent in less than two years. People feel they are now being asked to pay a further nine pounds per week (in total) for accommodation in an increasing state of disrepair.

A general meeting on 2 April, organised by the Tenants' Action Group, showed that there was strong support in favour of a rent/rate freeze at existing, pre-6 April, levels.

Following canvassing on the estate, over 100 tenants have decided to withhold the increase. A special bank account has been opened into which these tenants are paying the difference, so as to avoid the risks of individuals being victimised independently. Local labour councillor John Sweeney is one of the signatories for this.

The following four demands have been made by the action group to the GLC and Hackney Council:

- Rents to be frozen at the pre-April level.
- Rates to be frozen at the pre-April level.

Clive Aldiss



c. Proper maintenance and services to be restored to the estate.

d. Increased funding for public housing.

The last demand is mindful of the fact that in Hackney there are some 5,500 council homes unfit for human habitation, and some 14,000 people on the waiting list. Even on Nightingale, there are many empty flats in disrepair.

Efforts have been made to extend this freeze beyond Nightingale. Members of the action group have been in contact with tenants and tenants associations on other estates, and other sympathetic groups. So far, however, it is the only estate taking this course of action.

Those wishing to give support or wanting further information should ring Damian, tel 533 0147.

HIGH HILL

Things started when a group of women got together and decided that something should be done on High Hill Estate. There has been a gradual running down of facilities, long repair delays, and we have no community centre. We hear that the

estate is going to be handed over to Hackney Borough, yet no one tells us, let alone consults the tenants here.

We could see the victory that Lea View Estate have been able to win over modernisation through a strong TA. We decided that we needed a TA, and that we would fight for a community centre, so we leafleted the whole estate and called an open meeting.

Everyone that came along was very angry about the recent rent increases, especially when the facilities are so bad. We found that most people were already withholding the increase. We know that there are many others who are in agreement, but are nervous about taking action alone. Two people spoke from the Nightingale Estate, which is on rent strike.

We decided to set up a tenants action group. It was proposed that we should take a petition around the estate to see how much support there is for withholding the increases. And if people agreed, then we should follow the example of Nightingale, and hope that other estates will also join in a rent strike.

HCRE Brixton warning

The Hackney Council for Racial Equality warned after the riots in Brixton that there was a grave danger Hackney and other areas could face similar catastrophic breakdown.

"Indeed," they said, "there have been one or two close calls in recent months. HCRE is aware of the same deepseated discontent and distrust in Hackney with the tactics and methods of some police; that unemployment amongst young blacks is running at three to four times that of young whites; of the desperate lack of adequate housing and continuing racial harassment on housing estates; in short, similar suspicion of the police and the lack of any real progress towards racial equality in the borough."

"HCRE believes there is a need for massive additional financial resources for the regeneration of Hackney with very substantial funds going to programmes of positive action to promote racial equality. HCRE gives its wholehearted support to that end and deplores the fact that this borough should have been diverted into reviewing HCRE and other ethnic groups instead of seeking to co-operate with the minority ethnic groups and HCRE in seeking to provide facilities and to advance policies for racial equality in Hackney."

HCRE has welcomed the establishment of a public enquiry into Brixton under Lord Scarman, but would have preferred a tribunal which included additional members of the black community



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who are trusted and respected. It also emphasises that the enquiry must go wider than just examining policing methods, and look also at the economic and social causes and the racial discrimination that underlies the events.

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HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS holds regular meetings on Mondays at 8 pm. Place for this meeting may vary during May, as we shall be moving office soon. (Full details next month). If you would like to come along to help write, produce or sell the next issue, then please ring 249 0311 (evenings) or leave a message on 249 8191 (days).

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative non-profit making monthly newspaper produced by an open group of people who live or work in Hackney. We publish the paper because we believe that Hackney needs an alternative to the commercial press to serve the real interests of its people. We have no editor and no shareholders and no one is paid by the paper.

HPP is your newspaper: anyone who lives or works in Hackney is welcome to come and help us. All decisions are made collectively.

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Printed and published by
Hackney People's Press,
85 Dalston Lane, London E8.
Telephone 249 8191 (daytime
messages), 249 0311 (evenings
and weekends).

PETTY BUREAU

